

January 19, 1953

Dr. Stuart Mudd
Department of Microbiology
School of Medicine
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia 4, Pa.

Dear Dr. Mudd:

Thank you for your compliments of January 16.

I am surprised to have your request, unless the mails have been delayed. According to my records, a copy of "Cell Genetics..." was included in a recent mailing. Unfortunately my remaining supply is already essentially exhausted, and I have been obliged to reply to continued requests per the enclosed circular. I do hope that this parcel of reprints will reach you intact.

I note your terminological remarks. Communication often poses this dilemma, and I am sure I have not always adopted the wisest solution. It is not always possible to adopt commonly used words to fit the exact meaning of a concept, especially if other meanings have accreted by previous usage. Such words as plasmagene, mitochondria, transformation may be familiar enough, but by the same token they may only deceive the reader into adopting a different interpretation than the user intended, or worse, may deceive the user himself. One has to weigh the relative dangers of being mis-understood or not understood. If you have any specific suggestions, I will be very happy to consider them.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Associate Professor of Genetics